

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method of manipulating blanks in a machine
2 for packing smokers' products wherein the blanks are
3 stored in a magazine and are associated with collars at
4 an assembling station prior to confinement in outer
5 envelopes jointly with packs of smokers' products, com-
6 prising the steps of:

7 transporting successive collars of a series of
8 collars from a source to the assembling station; and

9 conveying successive blanks from the magazine,
10 along a predetermined path, and on to the assembling
11 station so that each blank reaches said station while
12 a collar is at a standstill thereat, including positively
13 guiding each blank at least along a portion of said path.

0593720-44354

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said guiding
2 step includes positively guiding each blank along each
3 portion of said path.

1 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the
2 steps of delivering to said station a series of successive
3 packs, positioning each pack at said station in a manner
4 such that at least a portion of a blank at said station
5 is disposed between the pack and a collar, and jointly
6 evacuating the pack, the blank and the respective collar
7 from said station.

1 4. The method of claim 3, further comprising the
2 step of terminating said step of positively guiding upon
3 completed delivery of each of said series of successive
4 packs to said station.

1 5. The method of claim 4, wherein said terminating
2 step includes the application of pressure to the blank
3 at said assembling station.

1 6. The method of claim 3, wherein said evacuating
2 step includes terminating said step of positively guiding
3 upon completed delivery of each of said series of
4 successive packs to said station.

1 7. The method of claim 6, wherein said evacuating
2 step further includes introducing each pack, together
3 with a blank and a collar, into a pocket of an indexible
4 packing conveyor.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the
2 blanks is a coupon.

1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein each of said
2 conveying steps includes conveying a blank to a position
3 beneath the collar at said station.

1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein said guiding
2 step includes simultaneously guiding several portions
3 of a blank in said portion of said path.

1 11. Apparatus for manipulating blanks in a machine
2 for packing smokers' products wherein the blanks are
3 stored in a magazine and are associated with collars at
4 an assembling station prior to confinement in an outer
5 envelope jointly with packs of smokers' products, com-
6 prising:

7 means for transporting successive collars of a
8 series of collars from a source of collars to the assem-
9 bling station;

10 means for temporarily maintaining each collar at
11 said station in a predetermined position;

12 means for conveying a succession of blanks from
13 the magazine, along a predetermined path, and on to said
14 station so that each blank reaches said station while
15 a collar is at a standstill thereat in said predetermined
16 position thereof; and

17 guide means for positively guiding each blank at
18 least along a portion of said path.

1 12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein a collar
2 dwelling at said station in said predetermined position
3 thereof is located at least in part at a level above a
4 blank at said station.

1 13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said means
2 for temporarily maintaining includes a device having at
3 least one pocket located beneath the blank at said
4 station, said guide means being arranged to releasably
5 hold a blank at said station against unintentional entry
6 into said pocket.

1 14. The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising
2 means for moving a blank at said station from said guide
3 means into said at least one pocket.

1 15. The apparatus of claim 14, further comprising
2 means for delivering packs into the at least one pocket
3 at said station.

1 16. The apparatus of claim 15, wherein said moving
2 means is arranged to push a blank at said station from
3 said guide means toward the pack in said at least one
4 pocket.

1 17. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said guide
2 means is spaced apart from the collar at said station.

1 18. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein said
2 conveying means includes at least one wheel and at least
3 one suction head on said at least one wheel.

1 19. The apparatus of claim 18, further comprising
2 means for separating blanks from said at least one
3 suction head not later than at said station.

1 20. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the blanks
2 include coupons.